The life of the glorious and blessed virgin and martyr Saincte Kathe ryne.

A.258.

Here beginneth the ryght excellent and full glorious life and passion of the ryghte blessed virgyn and martyr Saincte Katherine.

¶ The fyrst Chapter.

THys blessed virgine sayncte Katherine was by the dyssent of the lygne and of the noble kinred of the Emperoure of Rome, as it shal be declared more plainly here after by a noble cronicle, which most blessed lyfe and conuersacion was writtē of the solempne doctour Athanasius that knewe her byrth, hir kinred, holye lyfe & conuersacion. And this same Athanasius was one of her masters in her tender age and by the grace of the holy gost she was conuerted to the faithe. And after she was conuerted, she cōuerted the same Athanasius by holy and meruelous workes that our lord wrought in her and after by his wisedome he was made hyshop of Alysander, and was a glorious pyller of holy churche by the grace of our lord god, her holy merites as we do find by credible cronicles. For in the tyme of the Emperoures Diocletian and Maximian so great and cruel tyrannye was shewed in the world, and not onlye of christen but also of paynims, that in that tyme, manye realmes that wer subiect to Rome, put awaye the yocke of theire seruage and openly rebelled agaynst the emperour among which the realme of Ermonye was one that myghtelye withstode the tribute that longed to the Emperoure of Rome, wherfore there was chosen to apease that rebelly on a lorde of great dignite of the counsaile of hygh Constācius which was before al other manly in armes and therwith ryght discrete and ful of vertues. The whyche lord than when he came into Ermonye staunched so by his vertue and manlye gouernaunce the rebellion, that he deserued the loue of all hys enemyes, so farre forthe that

that the kinge and all his people desired that he shoulde wedde the doughter & the heyre of the lande. And whan this was done within a whyle after the kyng of Ermony dyed and Constancius was crowned kinge of that lande the whiche within a whyle after had a sone by the quene the whiche was cleped Costus. And soone after that dyed the quene for whome was made grete lamentacion of her people. After whose deth Constancius that kynge tourned agayne to Rome for to se ỳ Emperours welfare, and for to se and know how his lordshippes were gouerned into partyes, and in ỳ meane time came tydynges to the Emperoure of Rome how that grete bretayne ỳ nowe is called Englande rebelled agaynste the Emperoure of Rome, wherfore it was sene among the counsell that is was to require Constancyus the kynge of ermonye to take on him for to redresse the, rebellion the whiche requeste he goodly graunted & drewe hym towardes the partyes & in his cominge he ruled hym soo by his vertue and prudẽce ỳ peasybly and godly ẽdewed that lande to the Emperour. And more ouer he was soo acceptable to the kinge of Bretaine the whiche highte Cole and to all the people of that lande that withe one voyce the people requyred the kinge to giue him his doughter and his heyre vnto maryage. Of the whiche holye sainte Elyne that founde the crosse was gladde of that requeste and agreed fulli therto and made bitwene theim a solemne maryage. and within a while after he begate on her Constantyne whiche was after Emperoure by succession of lygne. Than not longe after dyed that constancyus the father of Constantyne whyche Constancyus by the ryght of his mother was crowned kynge of Britaine, and Costus was crowned kynge of Ermonye by the righte of his mother, ỳ whiche Costus was the

fyrst sone of Constancius whome he begatte of his fyrst wife þ was þ kinges doughter of Ermony, & whã that same sone of Constancius that hight costus wedded the kynges doughter of Cypres & be his heyre by the which as it shal be declared here after was brought forth saint Katherin, whyche holye virgin as ye shall here was of þ emperours kynrede of Rome. Constantine, and was of the nacions of britons, the whiche deliuered Rome from þ tiranny of Maxencyus. ¶ The .ij. Chapiter.

HEre beginneth the life of Saynte Katherin in the yere fro þ incarnacyon of oure Lorde. ¶. That is :: :: to saye ouerpast. There regned in the lande of cypers a noble & a prudent kinge whiche highte costus the whiche of bodely shape was mooste semely & goodly aboue all other, & in ryches mooste plenteous, & in al condycyons none lyke to hym, a quene he had lyke him selfe in all vertuous gouernaũce, wt whome he lyued a blessyd lyfe in as moche as longed to þ worlde, excepte bothe he & she liued after þ righte & costume of the paynyms and worshipped ydolles & falle goddes, This kynge for he wolde haue his name spredde through the world made a Cite in the whiche he raised a temple in the worshyp of false goddes whiche the blinde worlde worshipped at þ tyme, and he named the cite costus, pcedynge than forth þ time the langage som what chaũged & so they chaũged þ name of the cite and called it fame. Costus kepinge al waye the fame of the kinge. In this cite þ kinge & þ quene lyued after þ worldes prosperite as theyr hertes coude thinke, and righte as þ faire and the swete rose springethe amonge thornes, righte so betwene these two paynims was brought forth the precyous spouse of criste þ holye virgin saunte Katherinne, & whan this childe was borne it was faire of visage and so shapelye of bodye þ

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all that euer sawe her had greate meruaile in the beholdinge of her, & whan shee came to seuen yere of age shee encreased so in hye beaute & stature ꝑ all hoped ꝑ by her in time cominge shoulde be ꝑ Joye and prayslynge of all ꝑ lande of cypres. And whan that fewe yeres were passed & that she was more stronger of bodye she was set to scole, wherin she profyted wonderlye aboue all that euer was of her age, she receiued mooste plenteouslye all the crafte and conninge of the seuen seyences. And no wonder thoughe she dranke plenteously of the wel of wisdome for she was ordeined in time to come to be techer and an enfourmer of euerlasting wisdome. This kinge Costus hauinge so grete Joye of her wisdoome lette ordenne in her palays a fayre toure with dyuers studyes and thabres ꝑ she mighte be at her owne leyser in her studye and one to let her oute whan her selfe lyst, & therto he ordeyned seuen of the beste & highest maysters ꝑ mighte be fonde in al ꝑ worlde of those partyes. And within a whyle after ꝑ these maysters had bene w̄ this yong katherin she encreased so maruayllouslye in highe wisdome ꝑ the clerkes ꝑ were come to teche her & to enfourme her wer full gladde to be come her disciples & for to lerne of her

¶ The.iij.chapiter.

Thus within a fewe yeres after that this glorious dyzgyn was.viij.yere olde her father kynge Costus died & she was left a quene & heir after hi and whan the dates of mourninge were past the lordes and the estates of the lande ranne to this ponge quene & besoughte her that there might be a parleamente somonde at the whiche she might be crowned & receyue there homage that suche rule and gouernaunce mighte be set in ponge beginninge that paes and prosperyte were in her realme. And tha this ponge quene thanked them goodly

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and graunted them theyr askinge. Than the time came that the parlament was begon, and this yonge quene was crowned with grete solempnyte with a full royale feest & grete Joye to all her people. And whā the feest of the coronacion was ended, & as ꝑ quene sate in her parlyamente & her moder besyde her & al her lordes aboute her. A lorde rose vp by the full aduise of her moder, and her lordes and her comyns, and kneled downe before ꝑ quene sayenge these wordes to her. O mooste hyghe and mighty prynces our souerayn lady here that in erth like it vnto youre moofte souerayne noblesse for to wete, ꝑ I am cōmanded by the quene your moder & all your lords and comins to require your highnes for to graunt them that loue & grace ꝑ they mighte go and ordaine you som noble kinge or prince ꝑ mighte rule you & youre realme & vs all in peace & rest right as ꝑ noble king your fader and youre soueraine lorde did before you & ꝑ we mighte reioyce gracious lygnage of you ꝑ whiche is our mooft desyre & shall be our mooft Joye wout which we liue in grete sorowe and heuynes wherfore we beseche your excellent grace to graūt vs a gracious answere. This yōge quene heringe this requeft of her moder & of her lordes had full grete tronble in her soule how she might kepe her moder & her lordes in rest & kepe her chastite for all her desire was euer to kepe her body & her soule from corrupcyon, forsothe she hadde so grete and so perfyt loue to ꝑ vertue of chastite that shee had leuer for to haue suffer deathe than to blemysshe it in ony wise. But for to vtter her conceite so sodeynly she thought it not for the best. And with a sobre loke & coūtenaunce & with a debonayre voyce she answered in this wyse. Cosyn she said I thanke my lady my moder & all my lordes & comyns of ꝑ grete loue, zele & tēderneſſe that they haue to me & my

realme

realme trustynge fully that there is no grete haste to this mater of mariage ne ỹ there be no maner of peryl therin consideringe the grete wisdome of my ladye my moder and for you all which grete ruthe and kindnesse that ye haue shewed to me and vnto my realm trustinge fully in good continuaunce where as I trust we shall not nede to seke a stronge lorde to rule vs and our realme, for we thinke vs able ynoughe w̄ your good truthe & wisdome to gouerne vs and your realm in suche peas and rest as ỹ king my lord and fader left you in, wherfore I beseech you al to cease of thys mater at this tyme and speke of suche maters as ye thinke that is mooste nedeful & spedeful to good gouernaunce. ¶ The.iiij. Chapiter.

AND whan this yonge quene hadde ended her tale her moder and all her lordes were so sore abasshed of the aunswere they wiste not what too saye. For they wiste well by her abswere that she was in no wyll to be wedded. Than there stode vp a duke of her lō de that was her vncle and kneled vnto her with humble reuereuce and saide vnto her in this maner wise. My souerayne lady sauinge your highe & noble dyscrecyon this answere is ful heuy to my lady your mother and to vs all your true lyege men, without ye take a better aduyse vnto your righte, noble & discrete herte, wherfore I shal meue you of foure notable thynges that ỹ grete god hath endued you with before all erthly creatures that we knowe which must nedes cause you to take a lorde and husbande ỹ ỹ plenteous giftes of grace might spryng of you by succession of ỹ righte line vnto the generacyon whiche faithefull generacion must cause youre lyege people to haue infinite ioy & gladnes. Nowe good vncle saide this yonge quene what be those.iiij. notable thynges ỹ ye prayse so gretely. Thā sayd ỹ duke yf it ple

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ase your highte nobles I shal declare the vnto you shortly. Uncle she said saie to my what ye list & I shal here it gladly. Than saide the duke wo grete reuerēce Madame the firste notable point is ꝑ ye come downe fro the worthyest blode in erthe. The second is ꝑ ye be the greteste in erth, that now liueth as of a womā. The thirde is in cōninge & wisdome ye pas all other The.iiij. is ꝑ of bodye lyshape and hye beaute is none sene lyke vnto you wherfore Madame vs thynke ꝑ these .iiij. notable thynges must nedes constrayne you to enclyne to your desyres, & than this ponge quene with a sad loke saide. Now vncle sythen god, and ꝑ kinge hath wrought tho werkes in vs we be mache more bounde to loue hym & to please him & therfore we thanke him hnmbly of all his greate giftes But nowe sithen ye desyre that we shulde consent vnto your entent of our mariage we let you plainly wete the like as ye haue described vs we will discrine hym that we wil haue to our lorde and husbande & yf ye can finde vs suche one we wyll be his wife wyth all our herte for he that shal be lord of our herte & husband shal haue these notable thynges in hym ouer al mesure so farforth ꝑ al creatures shal haue nede of him and he no nede of none for he ꝑ shal be ony lord must be of notable blode ꝑ al thinges must worshiy hym, & therwith so greate a lord that I shal neuer thynke that I made hym kynge and he must be so riche that he shal passe al other in rychesse & so ful of beaute ꝑ angells shal haue Joye for to beholde him, and so pure ꝑ his mother shal be virgin & therewith so meke benigne, ꝑ he can gladlye forgyue al ꝑ offēces done to him. ¶ Now haue I described hym that I wyl haue & ꝑ I desire to haue to my lorde & husbonde, Go and seke hym and yf ye may fynde such one we wyll be his wife withall our herte yf ye wyll wyt

saue

saue and vtterly but if ye gette vs suche one we shall neuer haue none and take this for a fal answere, and with this word she cast doune her eien and helde her skyll.

The fifth Chapiter.

And when the quene her mother and al her lords had herd this, there was greate sorowe and heauines, for they sawe well there was no remedie for the matter. Then saide her mother to her with an angrye voice. Alas doughter is this your great wisedome that mē so far talke of, muche sorowe be you lyke to do to me and all yours. Alas who euer saw any womā forge her an husbāde with wordes, suche one as you haue deuised to you, ther was neuer suche one, ne neuer shall bee, and therfore doughter leaue al this folye and do as your noble fathers & elders haue done before you. Thē sayd the yong quene to her mother with a piteous sighyng voice Madame, I wot wel by verye reason that there is one muche better then I cā deuise who so had grace to finde him, & but ye by his grace find vs such one trustfullie I shal neuer haue ioye, for I fele by gret reasō ẏ there is a true way ẏ we be clene out of, wherfore we in darknes & ẏ lyght of grace come not we may not se the clere way, & whē he lyst to come he shal voide awaye ẏ darke clothes of ignorauncе & shew hym clerely to me which I so feruently desire & loue, & if so be ẏ he lyste not that I fynde him, yet reason cōmaūdeth me to kepe hole ẏ is vnhurt, wherfor I beseech you hūbly my lady my mother ẏ ye ne none other neuer meue more of this matter to me for I behight you plainlye that to dye therefore I shall neuer haue other but hym that I haue described to whome I shal truly kepe al the pure loue of my herte. And wyth this she rose vp, & her mother & al the lordes frō the perliamēt. And with great sorow and lamētacion they toke

their leaue and went on their way, and whē the yong la dy went home to her palace whose hert was so set on fire with this husband that she had described that she coulde nothing thinke ne do but al her minde and intēcion was only on him, wherfore she studied and mused continual ly how she mighte fynde hym, but it wolde not be as yet, for why she had no mayne therto. Notwithstandinge he was ful neere her herte, for he it was that had kyndeled it with the burning fire of loue, that wold neuer be quen ched by no paine ne tribulacion which was well seene in her glorious passion here after.

The.vj. Chapter.

HEre I leaue this yonge quene for a tyme sittinge in her palace cōtinually thinking and imageming howe she myght finde this newe spouse with ma ny a teare of elongacion and many a sore syghe for her blinde ignoraunce, and now I wyll turne as oure lorde wyl geue me grace to declare how our lord by his speci all miracle cleped her to baptim in singuler maner that neuer was herd of before ne syth, and after how he wed ded her visible in a glorious maner shewing her souera ine tokens of loue that neuer was shewid to none erthly creature saue only to our lady his blessed mother. Be side Alisander a certeine space of myles there dwelled a holi father in desert that hight Adrian the which had ser ued our holy father almighty god the space of.xxx.yeare in great penaunce, and on a day as he walked before his cel in meditacion ther came ayenst hym that most reue rent ladie that any erthly creature mighte beholde, and whē the heremite beheld her moste excellente estate and hygh beauty aboue kynd he was so sore astoined & dre deful that he fel doune as dead. Then this lady seynge his great dread, called him by his name & saide: brother

Adrian

adryā dzede not for I am not come to you but for youre grete worshyp honour & profyte, wh ẏ she toke him by the hande myldely & comforted hym & sayde to him in thys wyse. Adrian ye must go on message to the cite of Alisander for me & in to the palais of ẏ yonge quene & there ye must saye to her ẏ the lady greteth her well whose sonne she chase to her husbande syttyng in her perlamēte with her moder & all her lordes about her wher she had grete conflute & batayll in keppynge of her vyrgynite & tell her ẏ the same lorde chee dyd chose there is my son ẏ am a clene virgyn & he desyred her beaute, & he louethe her chastyte amonge all vyrgyns in erth, & hye her without taryenge ẏ she come with you alone into this place & she shall be newe clothed, and than she shall haue hym vnto her euerlastynge spouse, The hermyte herynge all thys answerde thus. O blessed lady how shuld I do this message for neyther knowe I ẏ cyte ne the waye, and what am I though I knewe it for to do suche a message vnto ẏ quene, her menye wyll not suffre me to come vnto her presence, and she wyll not byleue me of my message, but put me in duraūce as though I were a trayter. Adryan saide this blessed lady dzede ye not for that, that my sone hath begon in her muste nedes be perfourmed, for wete ye wel she is a speciall chosen vessell of grace before all other women, wherfore tarye not ne dzede not, for bothe ye shall knowe the cyte & also ẏ waye vnto ẏ palays, for there shall no creature take hede of you. And whan you come into her palays take good hede whiche dores open ayenst you and entre in boldely tyll you come vnto thys fayre yonge quene, whome ye shall fynde alone in her stodye stodyenge full sore in her wyttes of ẏ that wyll not be wherfore my sone hath compassyon on her labour and for her good wyll, she shall be specially fedde withe

his grace ꝑ was neuer none lyke to her oute take myne one persone that an his owne moder, wherfore Adryan hye you fast & bryng me my dere doughter ꝑ I loue wo al myn herte. And whan Adryan had receyued his mes-sage he layde him downe flatte before his souerayne la-dy sayenge in this wise. Al wooꝛschip and Joy be to my lorde god your blessed sone, and your blessyd will be ful filled and I wil go at your commaundement.

The.viij. Chappter.

And anone Adryan rose him vp and hyed hym fast to the cyte of Alysander & passed the deserte and so .. .. forth til he came to the citie and so he went forth to ꝑ palays as he had lerned so dyd he & ētred in ꝑ dores ꝑ whiche opened ayenst hym & so he yode frō chābre to chā bre til that he came to ꝑ secrete stody where as no creatu re vsed to come but she her selfe alone, & whan ꝑ he ētred in at ꝑ dore he sawe where sate ꝑ fayreste creature and ꝑ mooste goodly ꝑ ony creature might beholde & she sat so sad in her stody ꝑ she hearde him not ꝑ time that he kne-led downe besyde her & began his message in thys wyse Madame ꝑ endles might of the fader almighty ꝑ wys-dom of the sone al witty, & goodnes of the holy gooste. iij persones in one god be with you in your stody. And whā this yonge quene herde a mannes voyce in her stodye be side het, and saw an old fader al forgroweu in herre she was greatelye a basshed & wondred on this sodeyne case aboue mesure, for she knewe wel ꝑ she had shut her dore to her, wherfore she sayde with a dredful voyce what be ye that come thus mervayloushe into oure stodye where no man vseth too come. Came ye in by enchauntemente Naye madame he saide but as a messenger that is sente Good sir who was so hardie to sende you, soo homely in to our secrete stody. Madame he saide ꝑ quene of bliss

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and quene of all quenes, and lady of all ladyes, & floure of bounte & beaute of al womē. ¶ A ha good syr she said where dwelleth ỳ ladye ỳ ye prayse so greatly we herde neuer speke of suche one ¶ Madame her dwellynge is in her sons kyngdome where euerlastynge Joye reygneth ¶ Now good syr she saide who is her sone. ¶ Madame he saide ỳ kinge of blysse. This is she saide a ful grete merualle ỳ she is so greate in al dignytes & her sone so mighty as ye say and sendeth so symple a messenger as ye be. ¶ Madame he saide ỳ is ỳ properte of ỳ ladye to lous and cherysshe those that refuse thē selfe and al erthly thyngs for ỳ loue of her sone. And for this cause she sendeth me vnto you, she greteth you well by that token as her dere doughter ỳ whan ye sate in your parlyamente your moder and all your lordes aboute you kepynge of your dygnite ye dyscryued you an husbande, wherefore youre moder & al your lordes were in greate heuynesse, but for ye were so stronge in ỳ conflupte and batayle and that ye refused al erthely kynges she sendeth you worde by ỳ token that ye shal haue an heuēly kinge which is borne of a clene virgin and is kynge of al kinges lorde of al lordshyps to whose commaundement obeyeth heuē & erth & all ỳ is therin the same lorde is her owne sonne whyche is conceyued by the vertue of the holy goost, & bare hi without wemme of her vyrgynyte wyth soueraryne worshyp & Joye that neuer was felte of woman before ne neuer shal after, wherfore she sēde you worde by me ỳ ye shulde come alone to my selle with me & there ye shall se the blessed lady ỳ abydeth your comynge with grete Joye & gladnesse.

The.viij. Chappter.

AND whan this yonge quene hearde him speke so clerely of hym that she hadde so besyly sought with ..... many a feruēt tere & desire she was so brēmingli set

on tyre with the desire of his presēce with that she forgate al questions & her estate & meny and rose her vp mekely as a deboneyre lambe, and folowed this olde Adryan thrugh her palays & the cyte of Alysāder and so thrugh the desert & in her walkyng she asked hym many an hyghe question, & he answered her sufficientlye & enfourmed her all these poyntes of ỳ fayth, & she receyued plenteously all his informacions & vnderstode him meruayllously & thus walked this olde Adriā & this yonge quene after him thrugh ỳ desert to & fro they wyst not whether, wherfore Adrian was a sory man for he had vtterly lost his sel for he coude in no wyse finde ỳ way thederfayenge by him selfe. Alas shal this yonge lady perysshe here amonge beestes, Now blessid ladie helpe for I am almooste in dyspayre my sorowe is for this yonge ladyỳ so mekely hath forsake & lefte al ỳ euer she had & obeyed to your cōmaundemēte. And as he sorowed by him selfe thys yonge quene perceyued hym & asked hym what he ayled ỳ he sorowed so. He answered to her & saide, truely ladie it is for you & nothinge elles, for if I shulde die I can not finde my sell. I wote not whether that I haue brought you and what I shal do, alas I wote neuer fader she saide be of good cōfort & haue true faith, for trust ye fully that ỳ lady that is so good sēte neuer for vs for to perisshe here in wildernes. But fader she saide what maner mynster is that that I se yonder that is so riche and so fayre. Adryan loked & saide where se you ỳ mynster, yonder in ỳ este she saide, & he wiped his eien & beheldethe mooste gloryous mynster that euer man sawe. And whan he had sene ỳ he was ful of Joy & said to her blessed lady Joye you in god whiche hathe vysyted you withe so perfyte syghte, for there is the place where ye shall receyue so grete worshyp and Joye, there was ne-

uer none like you saynge she that is quene of all quenes. Good father she saide hie you faste, ỹ we were there for there is all my desyre and Joye. And within a short time they nyghed vnto that place. And whan they came to the gate there came agaynst them a glorious cõpanye of vyrgyns all in white chapaletes of lylyes, and theyre excellent beaute was so grete that his yong quene Katheryne ne Adrian mighte not beholde them but al rauished felle downe before them with grete drede. Thanne one that was more excellent than another spake firste & saide to this yonge quene, stande vp our dere syster and welcome withal our hertes by your grete mekenes and pure chastite our worship & Joye shal be gretely encreased wherfore be gladde in our lorde for al vyrgyns shal worship hym. Come forth to that soueraine Lorde that will werke in you the meruaylous werkes loue. And thus they passed forth with grete Joy & solempnyte tyll they came at the secõde gate, & whan they entred in there came ayenst theym a moche more glorious company withoute comparyson clothed all in purple with fresshe chaplets of reed roses on theyr heed, but whan this yonge quene sawe them she fell flatte before thẽ with grete drede and reuerence they benigly comforted her with gladde chere and said to her in this wise drede ye not our specyal syster, for here was neuer none before you more hertelyer welcome to oure lorde & to vs than ye be, and therfore Joye ye in our lorde for ye shall receyue our clothynge and our crowne with so grete worshyp and Joy ỹ al sayntes shall Joye in you. Come on nowe faste for the lorde of Joye abydeth you with ful grete desyre of your presence.

¶ The.ix. Chapiter.

Than thys yõge quene with Joye passed forthe hũbly wyth them as she that was straytle rauisshed

with Joy & meruayl that she had not one word to say to al that was said to her, whan they entred in the body of the chyrche she herde a meruaylous melodye of swetnes whiche passed all hertes to discryue and therewythe she beheldе a royall quene standynge in her estate hauynge about her a multytude of aungelles & sayntes, ỹ beauty & rychesse of this quene there myght no herte thynke ne penne it write, for it excedeth euery mannes mynde.

Than this holy company of martyrs w the felawshype of virgyns that ledde this yonge quene betwene them fell downe prostrate before this royall empresse &, with souerayne reuerence sayd in this wyse. O our most soue uerayne lady quene of heuen & lady of al the world, and empresse of hell, moder to our souerayne lord ỹ kinge of blysse to whose commaundement obeyethe all creatures bothe heuenly and erthly, lyke it you blessed lady to wete that at your cõmaũdement we present you here our dere syster whose name is specially wrytẽ in the boke of lyfe besechynge your benygne grace to receiue her as your seruaunt and chosen doughter, and to make a perfyte en de of that werke that our souerayne lorde almighty god your moost blessed sone & you haue meruaylously begon in her, with that the empresse with a glad reuerẽte chere loked on them & sayde, my welbeloued doughter come ỹ I may speke with ỹ, and whã this yonge quene Katheryn herde al these wordes of her moost souerayne quene she was so fulfilled with heuẽly Joy that she lay a grete whyle as deed, then this holy felawshyp toke her meke ly vp & brought her vnto this quene of blysse, to whome she said. My dere doughter ye be ryghte welcome to me be ströge and of good comforte, for ye be specially chosẽ amonge all women to be soueraynly worshypped wythe lyue of my sone. Katheryne doughter haue ye in mynde

how

how ye dyscryued you a husbande syttynge in your par-
lymente, wherfore ye had a great conflwyte & batayle to
defende your maydenhede. Then this yong quene kathe
theryn knelynge w̄ humble reuerēce & dred said O most
blessed ladie blessyd be ye aboue al women I haue good
minde ẏ I chose ther the lorde ẏ was ferre fro my know
lege but now good lady by his myghty mercie & speciall
grace he hathe opened ẏ eyen of my blynde ignorauce ẏ
I smel the clere way of trought, wherfore mooste blessed
lady I besech the with all mine herte ẏ ye do me merci &
grace & giue me him that ye haue behight me ẏ my herte
loueth & desyreth aboue al thynge without whō I may
not liue, with these wordes her spryte was set vp so faste
ẏ she fel down before her as deed. ¶ The.x. chappter.

THan this noble Queene of grace withe swete wor-
des comforted her and sayd, drede you not my dere
:: :: doughter for it shalbe right as ye desyre, but ye lack
one thing that ye must nedes haue or ye mai se ẏ presēce
of my son ye muste be clothed with ẏ sacramēt of baptm
wherfore come on for al is redy anone there was a fon-
te in the chyrche solempli arayed w̄ al that lōgeth therto
than this quene of Joy called Adriā to her & said to him
brother this werke longeth to you ẏ be a preest, but loke
ẏ ye chaūge not her name for Katheryn she shall hyghte
for sothe & I shal holde her my selfe to you & be her god
moder, than Adryā baptysed her, & whā she was clothed
agayne this heuēly quene sayde to Katherin mine owne
doughter now be glad & full of Joy for now ye lacke no
thinge ẏ lōgeth to ẏ wife of an heuēly spouse come nowe
w̄ me I shal bring you to my lord my sone that abydeth
you w̄ grete Joye. Than was quene Katherin so ful of
Joy that no hert coude expresse ẏ swetenes that felt, she
went forth with this quene of Joy till they came to the

quene, & as they entred in there came so grete a swetenes ayenst them ꝑ it past al hertes to thinke it wt ꝑ she behelde ꝑ semeliest yonge kinge standing at ꝑ outre crowned wt a riche crowne hauinge aboute him multitude of aũgels & saintes, and whã this blessed moder saw him she laid her downe ꝑstrate & of she toke ꝑ crown of her heed & saide to him wt hũble reuerence, moost soueraine worschip & Joye be to you kinge of blisse my lorde my god & my sone, lyke it your highnes to wete ꝑ I haue brought here as your wil is your louely seruaũt and hãmayd Katherin ꝑ for your loue hath refused and forsake al erthly thinges & is come alone at my sẽdinge with old Adriã forgeting al erthly good & estate trustinge full in my ꝑ myse wherfore I praye you righte hũbly my soueraine lorde god & derest sone ꝑ ye of your endles goodnes wil fulfil my ꝑmise, and he toke her vp goodly & said to her my derest moder ye knowe wel ꝑ your desire is my ful wil and I haue desired her to be knit to me in parfit maryage amonge al virgins ꝑ liue here in erthe, wherfore he said Katheryn come hider to me, & whã she herd that name, so grete a swetnes entred into her soule ꝑ she fell downe as deed before him, and wt ꝑ he gaue her a noble strengthe ꝑ passed kynde, and he saide to her thã in this wise as ye shal here afterward. ¶ The.xj.chapter.

BAtherin doughter can ye finde in your herte to loue me best aboue al thinge, & she beheld ꝑ blessed visage ꝑ aungels haue cõtynual Joye to beholde and sayd a swetyng and mooste blessed lord so haue I done and shall do while I lyue, for neuer loued I so feruẽtly ony thynges, as you nor neuer shall while I lyue. Thã saide this blessed kinge to Katerine, giue me your hande & she wt soueraine Joye offred hym her hãde. And than this glorious kinge saide to her. I take you now to my

wedded

wedded wife I behight you truely neuer to forsake you whyles your lyfe lasteth, and after your presente lyfe I shal bryngе you to endles life where ye shyl dwel w̄ me in blisse wout ende in tokening wherof I set this rnige vpon your fynger whiche ye shall kepe in remembraūce of me as your weddinge ringe, and nowe my dere wyfe be ye glād of ẏ sauth for ye must do many grete thynges in my name. And also ye must receyue torm̄ēt and payne & a great stroke in youc necke, but drede ye not my dere wife for I shal neuer departe fro you but euer comforte you. Thāne sayde this humble spouse. A blessyd lorde I thāke you my soueraine lorde ẏ ye wyll make me worthy to be of lyueray that haue suffred so moche for mee & that I may in some thinges be like you that my hert loueth & desyreth aboue all thynge, with ẏ this gloryous king bad Adryan do on his vestments & go to mas and saye ẏ seruice ẏ longeth to the custome of weddyng, & ẏ soueraine lord of blysse helde his spouse by the hande knelinge with her al the masse while. A lorde what Joye and blysse was felte in that vyrgyns soule all that time there was neuer uone suche felte before sythē of none out take her Joye that conceiued and bare this soueraine lorde of blisse whiche was his moost blessid mother. All the spirites of heuen Joied of this mariage so ferforthe ẏ it was hearde the same time as they kneled togyder how the aungelles songe this verse.
(Sponsus amat sponsā . Salutor visitat illam) And that withe so greate melodie ẏ no herte mighte conceiue it. This was a solempne & singuler maryage there was neuer suche hearde of before i erthe, wherfore this glorious vyrgin ought gretely to be worshipped, and loued amonge al virgins that euer was in erthe.
¶ And whan this masse was done this heuenlye kynge

saide

saide to her my dere wyfe time is that I must go againe fro whens I came, I haue fulfilled your desyre & yf ye desire onie more I am redi to graũte it you what ye lyst to haue of me & after my departunge hens ye shall abide here.x.dayes til ye be perfytly taughte all mi lawes and all mi wil,and whã ye come home ye shal finde your moder deed,but ye shal not be missed,therefore drede ye not I haue ordened one in your stede, & al that se her weene that it wer your owne person,& when that ye coin home she shal voyde. Now farewel my dere wife & wt that she cried, wt a great & piteous voice and said, A my souerain Lord god & al that Joy of my herte & of my soule haue minde on me,and wt that he blissed her & vanished away fro her sight,and for sorow of his departig she fel downe in a sowne,so that she lai as ded a large houre semig wout spirite,of life. ¶ Than was Adrian a sorye man he wept & cried on her that it was pitie to se or here, at ỹ last she awoke and lift vp her eien & saw no thing about her but a litel oulde sel and Adrian weepinge beside her for al was gone ỹ there was bothe mynsters ỹ palaies & cõfortable sights and specialli he ỹ was cause of al hir Joie & comfort. Now is her hert in sorow & in mournige so greate ỹ she coude nothinge do but wepe & sigh til at ỹ last she behelde ỹ ringe ỹ our blissed lorde set on her finger & than she sowned againe & than kissed it an. C. sithes with many a pitious tere & Adrian cõforted her in ỹ best wise with good exortacio and she toke mekely his confort & obeied him as her fader & dwelled withe him there ỹ time ỹ our lorde assigned til she was sufficiente ly taught al his lawes and al his wil. ¶ The.xij.chap.

AND whan time came she went home agayne to her palays and as sone she might she made all her me- ny to receyue baptysme and.iij.yere after she kepte her

her houſholde in her palays wt ful cryſtē gouernaunce & lo her Joi was euer to ſpeke and to thinke on her lord & ſpouſe there was nothynge elles in her minde, and bi his worſchyp & his prayſing many a creature ſchee conuerted to him in his time ſhe was neuer ydle but continuallye occupyed in his ſeruice and ful of brēing charyte for her pleaſure and deſire was for to draw creatures to hys ſeruice. Thus J let her dwel in this palais fulfilled wt ver tue and as the dere & ſinguler ſpouſe of almightye god. And in this meane time ỹ emperoure maxencius ỹ was ful of enuy vnto goddes lawes & a grete tyrānte couſydering ỹ grete nobles of the city of Alyſandre ordained him for to com thider with a great multitude of peple to aſſēble both poore & riche to do ſacryfice to his ydolles and falſe gods, & the chriſtē peple that wold not do ſacrifice he made them cruelly to be tormēted. The yong quene Katheryn was thē of the age of .xviij. yere dwellyng in her palays ful of riches and of ſeruantes & as ſhe ſate in her contēplacion of her mooſte dere lorde & ſpouſe ſhe herde an huge noyſe of ſong and inſtrumētes of muſicke and crienge of beſtes, and ſhe wondred gretli what it might be and called a meſſenger anon & bad him go & bring her worde what it ment he did her cōmaūdement & came againe in haſte & told her al the maner thereof whā ſhe herd it ſhe fel in a great ſorow for the worſhip of her lord & true ſpouſe ỹ ſhe thought ſhe might not endure it wherefore ſhe roſe vp in grete haſte forgetinge her ſelfe and al worldli eſtate & made ỹ ſigne of ỹ croſſe in her forhede and went ſtreight to ỹ emperour, & whan ſhe came ſhe beheld on eueri ſide and ſaw manie chriſtē moued to do ſacrifice for dreede of deathe, wherefore ſhe was ful ſore a greued in her ſoule. Than ſhe wēte boldli thrugh ỹ preſe, & al tho that beheld her had gret meruail of her

great beauty & many one left their sacrifice for comyng to behold her. And when she came to the emperour with a glad chere she looked on him and saide to hym in thys wise. Sir emperoure: the dignitie of your order and the way of reason wold moue to saue if ye were the creature of heauē, and that thou woldest call againe thy courage from thy false gods which thou worshipest, and worship the very god of heauen that made al thinge of naughte. Why hast thou assembled all this multitude of people in vaine for thy madnes to worshyp thy false idols, arte ꝑ not ashamed for thy blindnes, thou merueilest greatly of this temple that is made with mans hand and the preci ous ornamēts that shal be, but ponder before thy face of the wind, thou woldest rather if thou hadst any resona- ble wyt merueile of heauē and erth and al thing conteyned therin, the sun, the mone, the starres, and howe they serued fro the beginning of the world to the end and thei reigne night and day from the occident to the orient they be neuer wery, and whē thou hast perceiued al these thin ges aske and lerne who is the maker of them, and when thou hast knowen hym by his grace, thou shalte knowe ther is none lyke hym for he is almightye god, therefore hym worshyp and glorifie as the almighty king of hea- uen, and none but he, kynge of al kinges and lorde of all creatures. Then began she to declare to hym the incar- naciou and the merueilous goodnes of the holy gost and the son of god, wherfore the emperour was wonderfulli abashed and could not answer her. But at the last he said O thou woman, suffer vs to ende our sacrifice and after we wyl answer the. Thē cōmaunded he that she shoulde be brought to his palace and kepte there wyth great dy- ligence. Forsoth he and al that herde her had grete mer- uaile of hir wisedome and her beautye, for she was faire

before

before al womē that liued in tho dayes, & so she appered to al to ꝑ loked on her, and specially to the cryste that were constrayned to do sacrifice for drede of deathe they toke such a courege in ꝑ beholdinge of her sadnesse & reuerent beaute ꝑ they had leuer to suffre deathe thā for sake the faith of christ Jesu. ¶ The.xiij.chapiter.

After al thys ꝑ emperour came to his palays and sente for this yonge quene, & saide to her in thys wyse. Wayden we haue herde of your eloquens, and we meruaile gretelie of your wisdome, we were so occupied in sacrifice ꝑ we mighte not entende to you, wherefore we aske you nowe what kinrede ye be comen of, & she answered & saide to him, ꝑ I shall answere you shal not be to mine auaūtage of pryde but onely for ꝑ loue of trouth I am Katherin doughter vnto kinge Costus, and thoughe I were borne & nourished & taught al the liberal artes, yet showed I to ꝑ here howe I haue al worldly things refused & giue me fyersly to our soueratne lorde Jesu criste ꝑ is very god & man, wherfore the goddes that ye worschip be very vaine and false without ony profyte they maye suffre none in tribulacion nor deliuer none ꝑ be in perill. Than said ꝑ emperour to her yf it be so as ꝑ sayest, thā all the worlde faileth & thou onelie saiest soth & all trouthe shal be cōfermed by two or thre witnesses for if thou were an aungel or an heuenlye virgin yet me ought not to byleue ꝑ alone, & so moche ꝑ lesse ꝑ thou arte a frayle woman. Than she answered him thus to be ouercōmen so ꝑ ꝑ grete yncōbraunce out perturbaciō be not in ꝑ corage of ꝑ ꝑ holdest thy selfe so mightye, for yf ye wil be gouerned by good corage ye shal be kinge and elles trust me fully ꝑ ye shall be a thrall, wherefore labour thou to enbrace vs to thy deedly subtyltes wt thine ensāples of phylosophers they auayle ꝑ righte nought &

they

they hurte vs not. But and if ꝑ wilte be a meke disciple I shal teche the ꝑ trouthe of phylosophy where ꝑ maiste lerne to knowe thy god & euer to rule thy selfe as a king whan the emperour saw that he coud in no wise answer her by wisdome, than he departed away from her withe a great wondring and sent anone her letters to al ꝑ gramariens & rethoricies that they shuld come to his presence in grete haste. And if they ouercome an eloquent maiden he wolde rewarde them wt meruailous giftes. And so there were brought forth fiftie maisters ꝑ surmounted al erthly men on worldlie wisdome whan they came vnto his presence they desired to knowe ꝑ cause of their commynges. Than the emperour said we haue a maid none like to her in soueraine wisdome wihche labourethe to confound our laws and said ꝑ our goddes bē fēdes & if ye maie ouercome her I shall sende you home to your countres with gret worship. Thā one of them ꝑ was of grete presumption saide, it was a wonderful counsail of an emperour ꝑ for to ouercome a faire maide hathe called to him ꝑ wisest men of ꝑ world fro ferre parties whā one of the simplest children ꝑ we haue mighte ouercom her ful lightly. Than said ꝑ Emperoure I mighte haue constrained her to do sacrifice but I had leuer ye ouercome her by your argumentes. Thā said these maisters let bringe her forth, whā she is ouercome by her foli she shal wel knowe that she saw neuer erst wise men.

¶ The.xiiij. Chapiter.

And whan this glorious virgin knewe the stryfe of the disputacion that abode her. she recōmaunded her to her soueraigne lord with ful trust of his promise. Than an aūgel appered to her & bad her not dred but be stronge & stable in ꝑ faithe for ye shall haue gret victory & bringe them all to ꝑ crowne of martyrdome

Than

Than her soule was full of Joy yeldyng soueraine wor
shyp to her soueraine lorde and trusty spouse. And whā
she was brought fore, the emperoure & the maisters she
said to ỳ emperour this is a fayre iudgement of an em-
perour to set fyfty masters ayenst a symple maid, and be
houeth thē grete mede for theyr vyctory, & me al onely ỳ
cōstrayneſt to dispute wt thē wout hope or mede, but mi
lorde Jesu christe is vere hope & mede to all tho ỳ striue
for hym, he shal be onlye wt me & be my ꝑfite mede. Thā
ỳ masters begā & said that it was ipossible ỳ god myght
be made mā, or els that he might suffre deth. Thā ỳ ho-
ly virgin saide & begā to shewe by holy scripture ỳ there
was nothinge impossible vnto god. And shewed them
that ỳ paynis had said it lōge before or it was done, for
Caton had saide it in Sybelly ỳ sage. Also she sayd that
he was blessed ỳ shulde hange on a tree. And whan that
ỳ virgin had shewed them by open preues theyr blynde
nes and had declared their goddes vayne & falſe these
maisters were astonyed and abaſshed that they wist not
what to say but helde them styll, Thā the emperoure
seynge thys was fulfilled withe grete wrathe, and begā
to blame them sharplye that they woulde suffre so foule
them selfe to be ouercome wt a symple mayden. Thā one
that was mayster ouer all the other sayde. Syr Empe
oure wete it well that there was none that mighte hold
ayenste vs but he were ouercome saue onely thys may-
den in whom the spirit of god speketh ayenst vs with so
grete meruail that we haue no seasō to speke ayenst Je-
su christe. Therfore we knowlege vs sadly but yf ye can
giue vs more ꝓfytable sentēce of our gods that we haue
worshipped to now or els we be al conuerted to Jesu cri
ste & whā the tiraūt herd this he was all set on a fyre in
woodnes, anone he cōmaūded ỳ they shulde be brente in

ỹ middes of the cite. This holy virgin comforted thē & stabled thē to suffre martyrdome & taughte thē diligentely ỹ faithe, thā they sorowed ỹ they sholde die wout baptim. Than ỹ holye virgin answered them & saide, drede you not my dere brethren for the shedinge of your blode shall be counted to you for your baptim, blisse you wt the sygne of the crosse in token of ỹ passion of Jesu criste, ye shall be crowned & glorified in heuen, & whan they were caste in the mids of ỹ fire they yelded vp theire soules to god ỹ nother theire clothes ne their heere was hort nor ony thinge wt the fire & than ỹ cristen men buried theire bodies. Than the tiraunte spake to ỹ virgin & saide O thou noble virgin haue pite on thy youth & thou shalt nexte ỹ empresse be called lady in my palays, & thy ymage shall be made in the middes of the cite & worshiped of al as gods. To whome the virgin Katheri said. O ỹ moost noble foole, leue to saie suche voide thinges for it is wickednes to thinke on them I haue tolde ỹ plainli & yet I do, ỹ I am coupled to my lorde Jesu criste as his spouse, he is all my Joye to my lorde Jesu criste sweetenes of my soul, wherfore neyther for fayre wordes nor for drede of tormentes shalt thou neuer departe me fro him in no maner of wise.

¶ The. xv. Chapiter.

AND than he was fulfylled al withe woodnes and sayde to his mynysters. I commaunde that she be spoyled and sore beten wt scourges, & in the meane time themperour rode out for certain occupacions, & the empresse had gret desire to se this holy virgin, wherfore in a night she toke wt her ỹ prince of knightes whose name was cleped purphery, & they wēte preuely to the prison where in this holy virgin was. And whā ỹ she came thyder she sawe so grete a light wtin ỹ prison hous ỹ her thought al erthlye lighte was but darknes therto & ther wt she sawe glorious sight of aūgels ỹ benignely anoynted

ted ꝑ woundes of this holy virgin. Thā this glorious virgin began to exorte and to teche this quene & empres ꝑ Joyes of heuē w̄ so swete & deuoute wordes that she cōuerted her to the faithe. And Katheryn bad ꝑ she sholde be stronge for she shulde receyue ꝑ crowne of martirdome, & so they spake to gyder tyll it was midnight and whan purphery had herde al theyr talkynge he fell downe to the fette of the virgyne & receyued ꝑ faithe of Jesu criste with. CC. knightes. And for that the traunte had cōmaunded that she shulde be. xxx. dayes wout meate & drynke, almightye god her soueraine lorde sente to her a whyte coluer fro heuen & fed her w̄ heuēly mete. After our lorde Jesu criste came to her him selfe w̄ multytude of aūgels & saide to her in this wise, My dere doughter & truste wife knowest thou wel thy maker for whom ꝑ haste taken on these labores, & trauylous batayles & whan she behelde her soueraine lorde & herde hym speke she fell downe to his fete with soverayne Joye & said O my derest & moste soueraine lorde, how shuld it be but yf I knewe you that hath shewed me so moche grace. & soverayne Joye & ꝑ swetest of my soule blessed lorde ful sore hath my spyryte longe after you, O god lorde withe all my herte that is truely yours I thank your goodnes for all this victory ꝑ ye haue gyue too me & I am redye my dere lorde & my god w̄ al the will of my soule to receyue for the loue of your name all the torments ꝑ may be soughte for me, wherfore sweetest lorde haue mercy & mynde on me. Than our lord w̄ a blesse. & gladde vysage saide drede ye not my true wyfe but be stronge and of good comfort for I shall be with you in all your batalle & neuer departe from you. And with that he blessed her and vanyshed awaye from her sighte, And than so greate a sweteneſſe abode in the pryson after his departynge,

that no herte mighte thinke it. whan ꝑ emperoure was retourned home againe he cõmaũded ꝑ this virgyn shulde be brought before him, & whan he sawe her shine i hyghe beaute there as he wend ꝑ he sholde haue ben dysfygured by ouer greate fastynge, he wẽde ꝑ some of her kepers had fed ꝑ mayde therfore he was out of hym self for anger, & cõmaunded that the kepers shulde be tourmented. Than saide this holye virgin, truelye I toke no meat of mãnes hand of al this tyme, but my lorde Jesu cryste hath nourished me. Than ꝑ emperour said to her I praye the fayre virgin set it sadly i thy minde ꝑ I shal tell the, loke ꝑ ꝑ answere vs not by suche voydy wordes as ꝑ haste done here before, for we will not holde you a chamberer, but ye shall haue ladyshyp in our realme as quene of soueraine beaute, vnto whome ꝑ virgin answered now syr emperour I pray ꝑ vnderstande me well & Juge by true Judgemẽt wheder ought I to chose almighty kinge euerlastinge moost faire & moost gloryous or elles a foule stinkinge dunge hill & moost foule & horrybls corrupte. The emperour full of wrath and despyte saide to her, chose of two thynges to do sacrifice or suffre tormentes & perisshe. Thã she answered & saide tarye ꝑ not but ds to me what torment ꝑ euer thou wylte, for I despyse, to suffre for my god my flesshe & my blod as hee offered for me him selfe, he is my soueravne & my god & al the desire of my hert. ¶ The.xvj.chapiter.

THan was there a cruell tyraũt ꝑ for to please ꝑ emperour thoughte howe he sholde do ordeyne foure .... wheles of yron euẽ roũd w sharp nails & ꝑ to ouer wheles shold rẽne ayenst ꝑ two nether wheles w grete violẽce so that they shulde all to rent and tere ony thynge that were put bytwene them. ¶ Than this holy virgyn prayed our lorde ꝑ he wolde by hys myghte destroy

this

this torment to ꝯ praisinge of his name so that ꝯ people
mighte by his vertue be conuerted by ꝯ miracle, & anone
as she was set in ꝯ torment ꝯ aungell of our lorde was
sent & al to brast ꝯ tormente with to gret violence that it
slewe foure. M. paynyms. Than the empresse ꝯ stode in
her toure & behelde all this was smyten wt so grete sorow
we ꝯ in haste she came downe & blamed them sharply of
so greate cruelte. And ꝯ emperour herynge thys ws full
of woodnes & he commaũded but she wolde do sacrifice
ꝯ ye shoulde haue her brestes rente of wt tonges of yron
& after ꝯ her heed to be smiten of. And so as she was led
to her martyrdome wardes she prayed that holy virgyn
saynte Katheryn ꝯ she wolde pray to our lorde for her, &
she answered & said, drede ye not ye wel beloued quene
of god this daye ye shall receyue an euerlastinge kyng-
dome, & ye shall haue vndeedly kyng to your husbande
full of goodnes, for this foule deedly corrupte wretche ꝯ
ye haue & haue had before, & this blessed quene was ful
of sad faythe cõmaũded ꝯ tormẽtoures to do as they we
re bedẽ, & thã they led her out of ꝯ cyte, & wt tõges of yrõ
ꝯ drewe of her brestes & toke & smote of her heed, & thã
Purphery toke ꝯ body preuely & buryed it, in ꝯ daye su-
ynge the body of ꝯ quene was asked after, for the Empe
rour cõmaũded ꝯ diuers men shulde be tormented to tel
therof ꝯ troth. Purphery came afore al ꝯ people and said
It is I ꝯ haue buried the seruaũt of christe Jesu. Than
Marencius for wo began to grinne wt his tethe & to trẽ
ble as a woodman & cried dredefullye. O ꝯ cursed cay-
tyfe loo here Purphery ꝯ was onely keper of my soule &
confortе all my desease nowe haste thou deceiued me
And whan he had sayde these wordes to his knyghtes.
They answered and sayde Purphery hath doone wisely
we all be truely cristen as he is & redy for to dye for the

loue

loue of Jhesu cryst. Thā ꝑ emperour dronkē in wodnes cōmaunded that al theyr heedes sholde be smytē of and that theyr bodyes shulde be cast in ꝑ myddes of the fyre Than he called forth ꝑ holye virgin Katherin to hī and saide, if it be so that thou madeste my wife dye woyth thy wytchecraft if ꝑ wylte repente that ꝑ shalte be the fyrste of my realme as mooste souerayne quene, & if thou wilte not thou shalt dye anone. To whom she answered & said do that anone all that thou haste to do, for I am redy to suffer all that thou haste to do, for the loue of my lorde god. And anone he gaue the sentēce ayenst her & cōmaū-ded ꝑ she shulde be heded. And anone she was ledde oute to ꝑ place ordeyned, & whā she cam there she kneled downe & lifte vp their eien to heuē & prayed to our lord Jesu criste. O blessed kynge as thou arte ꝑ worship & Joye of al virgyns & very hope & helpe of al true beleuers I beseche the my lorde god ꝑ who so euer haue mynde of my passyon & it be at his deth or at ony other necessyte ꝑ wil call vpō me for helpe that anone they maye haue cōforte of their prayers and ꝑ they may be herde of theyr asking

¶ The. xvii. Chapiter.

AND anone a voice was herde from heuen ꝑ sayd come on my fayre loue & dere wife, ꝑ gates of heuen ben opē ayenst ꝑ I behote the that all tho that worshyp thy passyon shall haue heuēly comforte and for whō thou prayest shall not perysshe and than her blessed heed was smyten of & in stede of blode there came a grete streme of mylke, and thā anone aungelles toke the bodye of her, & bare it to ꝑ mounte of Synay more than. xxx. dayes Journay thens, & there they buryed it worshipfullye But in as moche as it was not knowen where her body was become, there was grete lamentacion amonge the crysten people, and thus they sayde amonge them. Alas

tho

the moſt clere lyght and firſt bringer of vs to our faithe which was ful of wiſedom and the tẽple of the holy goſt is gone fro vs. But of this grete heuines I leaue and re turne to ſhew you as I finde writtẽ how the precious & holy bodie was found which bodye as it is written was an. C. and. xxx. yere hyd from the knowledge of chriſten people. And whẽ our lord lyſt to ſhew the gret plenty of mercy he graũted vs the holy relicke of his wife. In the region of the mount of Sinai there were many chriſten heremites that were enflamed with the holy goſt, & had knowledge of the holy virgin where by the comẽ aſſente they ordened oetwene thẽ a chapel wherein the holy vir= gin myght be worſhiped as ſouerain ſpouſe of chriſt Je= ſu cõtinually with worthy praiſing. This chapel was or dened by the diſpoſicion of god not far from the hieſt top of the mount, wher faſt by was the place wher the buſhe grew wherein our lorde lyſte to apere to Moſes, in this ſaid chapel the holy hermites in grete abſtinence and de uocion liued a bleſſed lyfe, wherfore the angel of god ap peared to thẽ ſaying theſe wordes, your effectual deuoci= on god hath behold frõ henen, wherfore he hath ordened to graunt you this grace that by you ſhall be founde the holy body of the glorious virgyn ſainte Katherin to hys ſoueraine worſhyp and therfore aryſe and folow me tho ugh it be ſo ye ſe me not. Folow the ſhadow of the palme that I beare in my hand, for it ſhal neuer departe frome your ſyght. The hermite anone folowed the aungel tyll they came where vnethe anye creature myghte enter for ſtraytenes of way and ſharpnes of rockes and whẽ they came euẽ to the top of the hyl, they ſaw not the angel but the ſhadow ſo euidẽtly of the palme that all the place ſe= med ful of ſhadowe of the leaues of the palme whereby they came to the place where her holy bodye had laine a

hundred

hundred and thyrty winter in a stone, the flesshe dried vp in length of tyme, but the bones wer so cõpacte and pure that it semed kept with the cure of aungels. Then they with gret ioye and reuerẽce toke vp the holy bodye and bare it downe to the chapel that they had ordeined. And it semed to be done by miracle, for the place ther the laye was so narowe and straite, & so daungerous to come to that vnethe any mans mynd might imagine how it myght be done, and whẽ this holy bodye was brought in to the chapel with grete solemnite, they ordeyned then the feast of the inuencion of this virgyn it is kept in the parties of deuoute christẽ people about the tyme of the inuẽcion of the holy crosse. And this place our lord ordeyned to worshyp by grete miracle shewed in it. And of the holy bones that lay an. C. and. xxx. yere dryed in the top of the mount and after the plentie of oyle welled out largely which is of so grete vertue that it geueth helthe to all maner of sickenes as it is well knowẽ of many a deuote pilgrime that hath visited this holy and deuoute place. This virgin suffered death vnder Marencius the Emperour which was a great tyraunt that began to reigne in the yere of our lord god. CC. and. ir. as it is expressed in the inuencion of the holy crosse how Marencius was punyshed for hys felony and other mo with hym.

FINIS.

Here finysheth the lyfe of the ful glorious virgyn and martyr Saincte Katherine.

Imprynted at London in Foster lane by Thon waley.

BRITISH MUSEUM 15 JU 1920